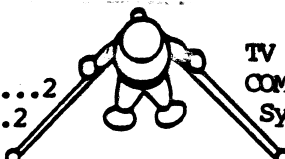


INSIDE MATWATCH.....

Simmons Refuses New Tag Slot.....2
 Dundee Bows Out of CWF.....2
 "No Holds" Drops to No. 6.....2

TV TEMPO/TUBE TALK.....3-4
 COMINGS & GOINGS.....5
 Syndication Ratings.....6
 I REMEMBER.....6



JUNE 19-25, 1989

MATWATCH

212 PINE HILLS AVE. AUBURN, AL. 36830 (205) 325-7522

VOL. 1, NO. 52

Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

GUTS...BUT NO GLORY???

I remember it as if it were yesterday. We had just worked our carcasses off at WIVM in Columbus with major multipart series, a massive promotion campaign, well-produced newscasts and an \$8,000 personal appearance tour throughout our region.

It was February 1978 and one month later, anticipating this would be the rating period to make us a serious news challenger in the market, my producer called to say, "Steve, we did our WORST ever!" I wonder if Jim Ross & Co. felt the same way Thursday afternoon.

There were some flaws, to be sure, including one glaring technical one. But CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS VII was a well-produced show in an ideally rabid environment at Fort Bragg, N.C. And NWA executives were eagerly hoping for a 5 rating to lead into the GREAT AMERICAN BASH tour.

The verdict: a 3.8 rating and 6.6 share, lowest in each category of the seven CLASH specials. The numbers were down 19% from last June's MIAMI MAYHEM special.

Before we analyze why, let's look at the pluses and minuses of this show: on the + side, while the U.S. Army received so much free publicity, CLASH VII could serve as a pilot for a revival of COMBAT!, but for a Flag Day setting, and with those enthusiastic soldiers in the stands, you couldn't beat Fort Bragg's locale.

The setup of Ranger Ross, the Steiners and Missy Hyatt on the obstacle course was a touch you'd never see on a Crockett show. With a couple of exceptions, the matches were well-booked and the Lex Luger turn was nicely-executed and gained the desired boos from the crowd. The using of Army medics in white coats to take a strapped-to-stretcher Norman away from the ring was inspired. Except for the commercial indulgences into Coors and Domino's Pizza, it was a first-rate Jim Ross job and the touch was nice to use soldier greetings on the bumpers.

No, I wasn't crazy about the Dingdongs and nobody who has called was either, even though they worked an acceptable match. In ring work, if there was a disappointment to the night, it was in the finish of Steve Williams-Terry Gordy,

CABLE RATINGS (Week Ending June 14)

	Rtg	Shr	Homes
WEF PRIME TIME (USA 6/12)	3.9	6.4	1.8 mil.
CLASH VII (TBS 6/14)	3.8	6.6	1.9 mil.
WEF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 6/11)	2.3	6.9	1.1 mil.
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 6/10)	1.9	4.3	933,000
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 6/11)	1.1	2.5	540,000
NWA M.E. (SAT) (TBS 6/10)	0.7	5.8	344,000

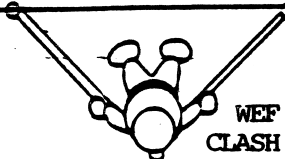
as I'd have much preferred a brawling finish to a Gordy retreat. TBS needs to invest in a wireless mike for Ross on location interviews. The mike with a cord looked awkward. The most glaring and inexcusable flaw of the evening was the out-of-position camera on Eddie Gilbert attempting to burn Muta. You could not see Eddie's approach to the ring and both Tommy Young & Gary Hart were blocking the view when the flame was thrown. Even in the better replay angle, the camera had to pan across Young's body. If the director knows these angles are coming---and I know he does---why is there at least one key angle on an NWA supercard in which cameras are ill-stationed?

The real story: the 3.8 rating was topped by a so-so, average episode of WEF PRIME TIME Monday night. A lot of second-guessing and analyzing will go on as to why. Let me offer my own observations: (1) the two NWA shows best suited to sell a TBS CLASH drew under 2 ratings Saturday and MAIN EVENT scored a perilous record low on Sunday; (2) so much new is in the NWA during this Flairless period that viewers either haven't adjusted or some of the elements are not what they want to see; or (3) people are simply BASHed, CLASHed and MANIAed out on TV and, despite a stupendous sales job on TBS Saturday and the best promotional support from the SuperStation to date, perhaps this CLASH was perceived as "just one more special" in a long line of "supercards" which are increasingly hard to sell as super.

As hard as this is to swallow, four of the main characters (Rhodes, Windham, Blanchard, Anderson) of last June's CLASH are now with Titan and it takes a while to replace that kind of talent with equivalent performers in the public's mind.

If there is a positive to the ratings, it is that the audience did continue to increase all night. The first hour pulled a 3.3 (down from a 4.0 for last June's opening hour)

(Continued on Page 6)



THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

DUNDEE LEAVES CWF AS BOOKER;
HALES TO SUCCEED?

MONTGOMERY AL - Bill Dundee, after only three months as CWF booker, has resigned from the promotion. Speculation centers on Memphis veteran Randy Hales as successor but CWF owner David Woods could not be reached for comment.

Promotion insiders have told MATWATCH part of a dispute with Dundee centered over the use of Adrian Street, Dundee's recent tag partner. Sources indicate management felt the use of Street as a top babyface was "an open endorsement of homosexuality."

Dundee is already back in the CWA. CWF general manager Ron West handled booking for current TV shows from Birmingham.

PWF CONTINUES TAPING DESPITE
REPORTS OF IMPENDING SHUTDOWN

TAMPA - The Professional Wrestling Federation, albeit with a skeleton crew, has taped a new cycle of three shows, despite reports from high-ranking PWF executives that the group will imminently close.

At least two station executives MATWATCH has talked with say they've been told by PWF TV director Greg Solie that new shows will be cycled into July.

Shutdown talk developed in the last week in the wake of information that the PWF will not be used as a "feeder group" to the WWF as PWF wrestlers had been told by majority owner Dusty Rhodes, who recently left for Titan Sports. The promotion recently lost Al Perez, Bobby Jagers, Black Bart and Tony Anthony as regular competitors.

EBONY EXPERIENCE: SIMMONS
REJECTS, APPEARS IN TAG ROLE

ATLANTA - NWA wrestler Ron Simmons, whose contract has just renewed, refused a tag role with Butch Reed as The Ebony Experience on CLASH VII last week. But late reports have Simmons teaming with Reed in Johnstown, Pa. Friday night.

After a recent heel turn, Simmons was to join ex-referee Teddy Long's stable. MATWATCH had been told, however, that Simmons considered the Ebony role too racially stereotypical. The NWA drew an estimated 500 on the Johnstown card on a night Bon Jovi drew 14,000 in the same city.

PINFALL PROFILE

THE 25 SCALE ON CLASH

The cable ratings took the spotlight as our big story this week but our usual critical evaluation comes from our MATWATCH 25 SCALE.

I pretty much borrowed this scale from a format I used to "grade" newsroom performances of our week's shows and individual anchor and reporting efforts, key elements one looks for to evaluate if the nightly effort works. In news, it was quality of writing, use of video, communication ability, creativity and technical quality.

In wrestling, I choose five elements that are the important blend on a live special to make it or break it: crowd enthusiasm---no matter how good your show, if you don't have it, you're dead; announcing, the essence of communication and believability in a show. A good announcer can't help a bad show but he can improve a marginal one---likewise, those guys I regularly roast from Southern could kill Flair-Steamboat on their best night; quality of matches---did the wrestlers work well, did their contests bring intensity and fan interest to an ideal pitch?; overall production, a combination of pre-production (did the show have quality graphics, a good lead-in opening, good bumpers for transitions to commercial breaks, retrospective videos to set up matches, etc.) and live production (camera angles, closeups, were shots missed?, program flow, creative elements to maintain interest); and overall excellence of show, a combination rating on how all the pieces to the puzzle fit together.

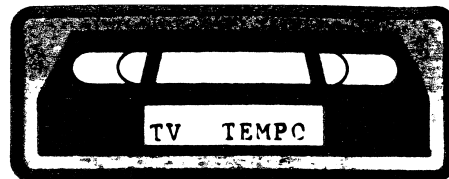
I don't grade pre-taped shows similarly because much of it is done in post-production where there is more care taken for polishing and correcting errors. The real test for any promotion is how it performs under fire in a live show, the same way as a TV news team does live every night in your town. The pressures are similar and the margin for error is great.

RATING THE CLASH: Crowd Enthusiasm, 4.5; Announcing, 4.3; Quality of Matches, 2.7; Overall Production, 3.0; Excellence of Show, 3.5; TOTAL RATING (on 25 Scale): 18.0

"NO HOLDS" DROPS TO
SIXTH ON MONEY LIST

LOS ANGELES --- "No Holds Barred," the Vince McMahon-produced film starring Hulk Hogan, dropped from second to sixth among movies in national gross earnings last week.

"No Holds" drew \$2.9 million in its second full week on 1,327 screens for a \$9.3 million 10-day total. The film is expected to lose a number of screens this week.



SCALE: PINFALL - Must See! FILEDRIVER - Excellent POWER-SLAM - Good DRAW - Average RESTHOLD - Fair BOMB - Poor PLUS - Midscale rating.

(NWA/TBS) - [CLASH VII]: WORLD TAG TOURNEY (Semifinals), Freebirds d. Dynamic Dudes; Midnight Express d. Samoan Sweet Team when, during ref bump, Road Warriors clothesline Patu. (Championship), Freebirds (Michael Hayes & Jimmy Garvin) d. M Ex with run-in from Terry Gordy. Ranger Ross d. The Terrorist (Jack Victory); The Dingdongs (debut) d. George South/Cougar Jay; Steve Williams double countout vs. Gordy; Norman (debut) d. Mike Justice; Varsity Club d. Steiner Bros. when Mike Rotunda suplexes Scott on a chair; NWA TV TITLE: Sting d. Bill Irwin; Ricky Steamboat wins DQ over Terry Funk when Funk hits Ricky with TV mike. Lex Luger makes apparent save but as he helps Ricky up, he clotheslines Steamboat, hits him with a chair and puts him in the torture rack. ANGLES: 1) Great Muta refuses to do "dragon-shy" demo vs. Trent Knight & Justice, so Eddie Gilbert runs in, attempts to burn Muta but burns Knight when Muta dodges; 2) Paul E. Dangerously clobbers Jim Cornette with horseshoe-loaded tennis racket before championship match. [MAIN EVENT SAT.]: Steamboat d. Irwin; Funk d. Ross; Steiner (Rick) d. The Bounty Hunter (Al Green). DRAW. [WCW]: Show joined in progress. Funk d. Jay; Steiners d. Keith Steinborn/Fred Avery; SST d. Rock Hard Rick/Mike Awesome; Hayes/Garvin d. Randy Rose/Mark Smith; M Ex d. Jeff James/Jim Bryant; Norman d. Bob Emery; Ross d. Lee Scott; V.C. d. Ray Lloyd/Bucky Sieglar; Sting d. Green; Gordy d. Williams when Garvin trips Doc up as he attempts Stampede. Aftermatch erupts into dressing-room emptying melee. REPLAYS: Ric Flair says he'll announce future July 1; Gilbert-Muta burn angle; Steamboat-Luger from CLASH. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - Steamboat d. Smith; Ricky Santana d. Snake Brown but is jumped by Irwin after; Rotunda d. Bill Holliday; New Zealand Militia d. Rose/Knight; Steiners d. The Raider/Steinborn; Butch Reed d. South; Great Muta d. Murdoch when he blows mist in Dick's face as ref restrains Gary Hart. Scott Steiner attempts save and is attacked by Muta. REPLAYS: Funk-Sting Asheville brawl; Muta blows mist at Missy Hyatt; VIDEO: Dynamic Dudes. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Joe blasts change in Luger, praises M Ex return. (NOTE: This was WORLD WIDE) RESTHOLD-PLUS. [NWA PRO]: Irwin d. Emery; Militia d. South/Justice; Murdoch d. Scott; Ross d. Raider; Dudes d. Brown/Steinborn; Santana d. Knight but Irwin enters and chokes, whips him; Sid Vicious (debut) d. Dwayne Bruce; Rotunda d. Scott Steiner using trunks as Rick & Kevin Sullivan brawl outside. REPLAYS: Missy-Muta, TBS "Rick Flair" angle. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Joe blasts SST for using pineapples & Muta for mist on Missy. RESTHOLD.

(WCW) - Al Perez d. Cactus Jack Manson; Robert Fuller/Brian Lee d. Frankie Lancaster/Chris Frazier; Mason-Dixon Connection d. Tony Anthony/Brodie Chase; Chris Adams/J.J. Funk d. Iceman Parsons/Brickhouse Brown in cage match. ANGLE: Tojo Yamamoto signs for "winner owns World Class" match after Eric Embry slaps him. DRAW.

(ACW) - Nelson Royal double countout vs. Bobby Fulton; Sam Houston vs. Colt Steel ends in pullapart; M.O.D. Squad d. Ivan Koloff/Tommy Angel; Robert Gibson d. Scott Spangler; Tai d. Black Panther; Brad Anderson d. Tommy Seabolt. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(SCW) - Nightmare Jim Powell d. Steve Prichard; Dino Minelli/Steve Lawler d. Steve Reeves/Bobby Bennett; 6-MAN: Tim Burger/Chic Donovan/David Sammartino d. Keith Steinborn/Steve Bennett/The Invader; Tommy Rich double DQ vs. Joel Deaton ends in pullapart. ANGLE: Georgia Power attacked by The Dynasty during an interview and Powell's hair is cut. RESTHOLD.

(CNF) - Don Harris/Tom Prichard d. Thomas Lively/Greg Brown but Mortons save from aftermatch beating; Terry Garvin d. Mike Surevich; Bill Dundee d. Don Sanders but Prichard/Harris run in before Danny Davis/Wendell Cooley save; Cooley d. Thomas Ivey; Adrian Street d. Lou Spiccoli; Davis/Jackie Fulton d. Lou Fabiano/Mike Davis. BOMB-PLUS.

(PORTLAND) - Key match: Billy Jack Hayes vs. Grappler in street fight ends in major melee; Beetlejuice wins DQ over Al Madril for over the top. ANGLES: 1) Madril signs for rematch with Beetlejuice, in which he must paint face and

dance to Beetlejuice's music if Al loses; 2) Scotty the Body's valet, Ginger, receives a package with a picture of Steve Doll inside. Scotty is angered and grabs Ginger by the hair. POWERSLAM.

(AWA) - REPLAY: Tom Zenk d. Paul Diamond and ensuing split of Badd Co.; Scott Norton/Mahoo McDaniel win DQ over Destruction crew; RETROSPECTIVE: Badd Co. as team. CLASSIC: Adrian Adonis d. Larry Hennig. BOMB-PLUS.

(CWA) - No report but we'll recap next week.

(WEF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Brutus Beefcake d. Bad News Brown; Greg Valentine d. Blue Blazer; Anabolic Warrior d. Dusty Wolfe; Tim Horner d. Barry Horowitz; Rick Rude d. Frankie DeFalco; Lanny Poffo d. Lance Allen; Hercules Hernandez d. Harley Manson. ANGLE: Snuka flies onto Honky Tonk Man after insults. VIDEO SPOT: Jim Duggan vs. Dino Bravo. RESTHOLD.

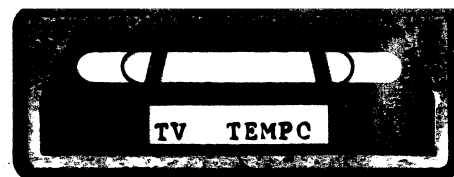
(WEF/SYND.) - [SUPERSTARS]: Anabolic d. Dusty Wolfe; Rougeaus d. Brick Bronsky/Tom Stone; Bret Hart d. Boris Zhukov; Ted DiBiase d. Red Tyler; Sheepwackers d. Todd Becker/Butler Stevens; Other winners: Curt Hennig, Rick Martel. UPDATE: Ronnie Garvin-Greg Valentine feud. BROTHER LUV: Jimmy Snuka is Pearl Harbored with guitar by Honky. DUSTY'S AMERICAN: Dusty as gas attendant. RESTHOLD.

[CHALLENGE]: Rude d. Chris Zarna; Bravo d. DeFalco; Koko B. Ware d. Horowitz; Rockers d. Stone/Curtis; Other winners: Barbarian, Twin Towers. FEATURE: Hogan thanks fans for seeing NO HOLDS BARRED. BOMB-PLUS. [SPOTLIGHT]: Hennig d. DeFalco; Poffo d. Allen; Barbarian d. Tom Slater; Valentine d. Blazer. BRO. LUV w. John Studd. BOMB-PLUS.

(PWF) - Nasty Boys d. Nick Busich/El Diablo; Steelman wins DQ over Lou Perez/Brady Higgins when Al Perez takes a chair to Steelman and Oliver Humperdink (Steelman was to team with Al but Al refused to go vs. his brother, cousin, or whatever); Steve Keirn d. Ric Diamond; Tyree Pride d. Coconut Kid; Jomo Kenya d. Joe Bobby St. Fleur with knucks but Tyree Pride saves; FLA. TITLE: Dustin Rhodes wins DQ over The Terminator when Kendall Windham runs in and starts hot brawl. Gordon announces Nasties have won Fla. tag title & introduces Ho Chi Wen. DRAW.

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Larry Zbyszko, AWA: "The Rob Lowe Romper Room is right next door to the Jimmy Swaggart Observatory." 2. Paul E. Dangerously, NWA: "Paul Ellering has a haircut which makes his head look like it's going through puberty." 3. Jim Cornette, TBS: "Wrestling with them (Midnight Express) is more dangerous than walking in Thomas Hearn's house." 4. Tojo Yamamoto, WCW: "I World Class. I President." 5. Adrian Street, to Terry Garvin, CNF: "You look like a garden home trying to imitate the Venus DeVil." 6. Tommy Rich, SCW: "Your name is Samuel F. Kent. The 'F' stands for fanny." 7. Jesse Ventura, WEF: "I didn't know NO HOLDS BARRED had Spanish subtitles—otherwise, how would Chico understand it?" 8. Jim Neidhart, WEF: "Some people think I'm strange. Other wrestlers think I'm strange (BA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA)." 9. Jim Ross, TBS: "Fred Avery's another dropout from Nutri-System." 10. Zbyszko, AWA: "We know Hulk Hogan wouldn't want to take on a wrestler."

11. Bobby Heenan, WEF: "I have here a bottle of Instant Andre. It's all sweat." 12. Jimmy Hart, WEF: "Next time, Rockers, you might just get a root canal with this megaphone." 13. Paul E., NWA: "The only queen I know of in the NWA is Jim Cornette." 14. The D.I., ACW: "I've seen a lot of crud-balls in Georgia. I don't want to see 'em again, especially that scrawny little Boni Blackstone." 15. Joe Pedicino, NWA: "Maybe he (Luger) is just going through a phase."



TUBE TALK

16. Chris Adams, WOCW: "The more money you start earning—the more you realize you're broke." 17. Al Perez & Gordon Solie, PWF: (AP) "You know nothing about family. You're not a Latino." (GS) "I know I'm not a Latino. I'm a Pollock." 18. Diamond Dallas Page, PWF, on St. Fleur swinging at Kenya: "That's like shooting spitballs at a battleship." 19. Solie & Page, PWF: (GS) "I didn't see him pull the moustache." (DDP) "If you didn't see that, Gah-don, you should go to Pearle Vision Center and have your glasses adjusted."

ALL-CLIQUE TEAM - 1. Vince McMahon, WEF: "...time will tell." 2. Iceman Parsons, WOCW: "...two peas in a pod." 3. Tim Dicks, SCW: "...fighting fire with fire." 4. Steve Williams, TBS: "...bit off more than you can chew."

RACIAL LINE OF THE WEEK - Chris Adams, WOCW, to Iceman & Brickhouse: "You remind me of one of those chocolate things that you bite the top off and there's nothing on the inside."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Ric Flair, CLASH VII: "I talk to my lawyers. I talk to my accountants. I try to figure out if there's a life after wrestling." 2. Flair, CLASH: "If my neck could carry my heart, he (Funk) wouldn't make it out of Fort Bragg tonight." 3. Tommy Rich, SCW: "I don't want to rassle for free. When I wrestle and don't make any money, my kids don't eat."

QUESTION OF THE WEEK - Dusty Rhodes, WEF, to female gas customer: "Have you ever seen a dipstick, baby?"

TEXACO AWARD - Rhodes, WEF, for singing, "Trust your car to the man that wears the star."

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. Paul E., TBS, calling himself "The Manager-Basher." 2. Jesse Ventura, WEF, calling Sheepwackers "The Marching Morons."

PASSWORD OF THE WEEK - "Unfireable," by Eric Embry.

BEST PICTURES - 1. TBS, Luger turn on Steamboat. 2. WEF, Anabolic ripping at Wolfe's face. 3. WOCW, Embry-Tojo angle. 4. TBS, Funk tossing Jay out of ring. 5. TBS, Norman brushing teeth.

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. Jim Ross, WWF, for saying Teddy Long's "new tag team" made first appearance on national special (the hazards of advance taping). 2. Bob Caudle, NWA, for "Samoian Swat Team." 3. Caudle, NWA, for saying a Gilbert-Muta match is "going to be a toin coss." 4. Lance Russell, NWA, for once calling Scott Steiner "Ted Steiner."

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - CMF, for super on Mike Davis as "THE ORIGIN RPM," instead of ORIGINAL.

BOO AWARDS - 1. AWA, for yetanother ESPN show with only one fresh match. 2. WEF, for failing to identify opponents twice during SUPERSTARS.

MISSED ISSUES NOTE

In our conversion to a First-Class permit with the U.S. Postal Service, some people have either been delayed or been missed with weekly issues. We are trying to catch up readers who missed receiving an issue as soon as possible but are trying to computerize the list.

Please send us a brief postcard reminder if you have missed a recent issue and let us know the specific number. FSB

ON MY SOAPBOX TIME: I have tried to be as diplomatic as possible on irritating direction during TBS wrestling. But no more. Can someone give me a logical explanation why we stayed on a microscopically wide shot for 1:35 Saturday night when the dressing rooms emptied after Doc vs. Gordy? Were the other cameras malfunctioning? Did a zoom lens fall off a ringside camera? The only way one could identify the wrestlers was from Ross' commentary. Enough is enough!....Owen Hart has definitely resigned from the WEF and may finish this week. He'll work Japan & Calgary and be married this summer....Many, many thanks to the team of RON (Lemieux) & KLON for keeping us on top of the PWF situation....No mention made of PWF tourney on this week's Fla. show, making one wonder if that created-for-Dusty belt is history....Late word is Flash Gordon Solie has found a new investor and will try to keep the group going.

TBS NOTES: WCW back to 6:05 this week and POWER HOUR debuts at 10:20 (ET) or after the Braves Friday night. I'm told to expect a big surprise on POWER HOUR....I'll be in Atlanta Wednesday night for the taping of this weekend's output....When Jim Ross said it was 120 degrees in that Fort Bragg arena, it was no lie. The perspiration soaked through Ross' suit & shirt onto his tie. Bob Caudle consumed about 10 Cokes during the 3 hours....Two stories on EBONY EXPERIENCE: one, the one you read on Page 2 and the other is that it wasn't Simmons in the team in Johnstown. More next week.

John Studd's departure over the last 2 weeks from WEF stems from displeasure with his WM5 check and feeling payoffs have been cut since Turner is not trying to raid Titan.... SCW doing another free car lot show, this time at Quality Ford in Columbus next Sunday...WEF returning to Montgomery AL July 27 with Savage-Beefcake on top....David Woods has dropped NWA from his Saturday lineup on WCOV/Montgomery.... PWF moving to TV 32 in Tampa....Did anyone notice Wed. night that The Terrorist had on Muta's old Super Black Ninja hood?....At least four sources outside the promotion have called to tell us Jim Crockett is bucking for Ole Anderson to be hired as NWA booker....Final question for Gary Hart: "What is a guy-gene?"

COMINGS & GOINGS

OUR SYMPATHIES: A couple of items which make one remember there's a real world out there. Mandy Simpson, wife of Scott (Nikita Kholoff) Simpson, passed away Thursday night in her sleep. Mrs. Simpson had been ill for more than a year with leukemia. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Nikita.

GET WELL, JERRY: We have not always had the kindest of words for Jerry Blackwell as a promoter. But as a person, he has many friends. We've learned that Jerry is hospitalized with a serious staph infection in Cumming, Ga., which has doctors considering amputation of one of his legs, should improvement not come. Our hopes and prayers are for a full recovery for Jerry. Pinfalls and bodyslams seem awfully small in comparison.

MISSED SHOTS: You want to count the missed shots, in addition to the blind shot of the Gilbert-Muta burn angle on CLASH VII? Try these: 1) Late on the impact of Paul E. hitting Cornette with the racket; 2) On the fans (which happened much too much again) when Bill Irwin began going for his whip; 3) Stayed with the Road Warriors so long we missed the M Ex's pin on SST; 4) Missed Scott Steiner's bump which left him with back whelps. Those are just the major ones and that's why we graded the show down two full points on production.

AN EXPLANATION: We've been told the reason Gordy-Williams ended so oddly is Terry developed knee problems in the match. There was supposed to be a brawl but Gordy was hurting. Williams looked confused legit because he didn't know why Gordy left, either.

RICH KID: Tommy Rich telling folks he has a July start date in the NWA. Rich made some strong on-air comments on SCW about "having to wrestle for free" at the car dealerships where the show has been taped.

DINGDONG SCHOOL: The Dingdongs, by the way, were Greg Evans & Richard Sartain, the latter from the old Jody Hamilton wrestling school. I've had about 25 calls from hardcore fans, none of whom liked the act but let me play devil's advocate: while I'm not fond of them nor do I think they're necessarily an answer, a concept like them may be needed as characters to get over with children.

ACW/SCW SHARE: Southern co-owner David Stiles is pushing stations carrying either ATLANTIC COAST or SOUTHERN to pick up both shows as it appears their cross-promotional plan is for real. But both will have trouble in Atlanta when they're forced off WVEU.

MEMPHIS MIKE: Paducah's Tony Richards of TV 54 has been offered a one-week guest shot on the color mike with Dave Brown in Memphis, likely in August. Michael St. John recently did a creditable job as a sub for Dave.

SOUTHERN MOVES: Mike Golden is in as a heel for SCW. Nightmare Jim Powell suffering from a severely swollen knee.

MUSIC HALL RING: Bob Armstrong promoting an indie show at the Atlanta Music Hall this past Monday with his entire family (probably the Armstrong Wrestling Federation), Wrestling II and a number of the SCW guys. Word had it that David Woods had considered returning Armstrong to the CWF booker role. Frankly, if I were looking for a new booker, I'd be calling Portland and talking to Len Denton.

\$\$\$\$\$\$: The 3.8 rating probably means some CLASH advertisers will be offered makegoods on either the TBS or syndicated NWA packages. But it still made good money. On the national feed, all but three of the 41 commercial minutes were sold. CLASH did, however, provide a strong lead-in for DEATH WISH II, the TBS movie which pulled a solid 6 share.

PROMOTION: No one can fault TBS' efforts to promote CLASH VII: a quarter-page ad in USA TODAY and a heavy on-air rotation of promos in all TBS dayparts and on CNN and HEADLINE NEWS. If there was a blooper, it was in the USA TODAY TV listing, which had the Road Warriors and Varsity Club (which wasn't even in the tourney) competing for the world tag team title.

CENTER STAGE: I'll be heading up, along with writer Richard Hyatt, to Atlanta Wednesday night for the taping of MCW and MAIN EVENT, along with the premiere taping of NWA POWER HOUR, which will air at 10:20 p.m. (EDT) Friday night or immediately after the Braves.

QUESTION MARK: I want to try an experiment. This Thursday night, from 8 to 10 p.m. (Eastern time), 5 to 7 p.m. on the West Coast, I'm going to open up the MATWATCH phone line (205-826-7522). Answer this question: if you could run the NWA for a day and make what you feel are 3 positive moves, what would they be? Please put your responses on my answering machine and keep your answers to less than one minute so others may call. That's this Thursday, June 22. If you get MATWATCH after Thursday, we'll do another Open Line soon.

ERRATA: John Lanigan's report on the recent M Ex-Badd Co. match came from Girard, Ohio, not Johnstown, Pa. And I miscued on the zip code for Ron Lemieux's ARENA REPORT: Write to Ron at 370 LAKE TAHOE COURT, No. 102, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS FL 32701. 50 cents each.

WHO OWNS ERIC?: I'm not sure how I regard this new angle which has Eric Embry "owning" World Class by virtue of his recent win over Tojo Yamamoto. How is the "owner" of any promotion expected to be objective?

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE: Next week's anniversary issue of MATWATCH should be 12-14 pages with a number of one-time special features. We hope it will be informative and bring into perspective our first year of MATWATCH. Remember, the double issue means we WON'T publish the week of July 4.

CLASH LINES

JIM ROSS: "This is like the Army-Navy game but the Navy's not here." **ROSS:** "I guess we'll call one of the Ding & the other one Dong." **JIM CORNETTE,** to inebriated soldier: "Hey, fella, we're fixing to save your life. We're gonna let you sleep this one off." **ROSS:** "Norman & Teddy Long have something in common. They don't have any front teeth." **ROSS:** "These keys (for Norman) are like putting a cross in front of Dracula." **BOB CAUDLE:** "I bet it'll be cooler tomorrow in Augusta." **CORNETTE:** "These guys in the Army know more about broads than Michael Hayes ever dreamed of."

SYNDICATION RATINGS

SIDELIGHTS (Continued from Page 1)

and grew to a 3.8 in hour 2 and 4.4 for the Flair interview, tag finals and Steamboat-Funk, the latter of which drew a 4.5/8. The growth is indicative that this was perceived as a strong enough show to pick up viewers through the night. There just weren't enough around at the start, even though 2.2 million saw Steamboat-Funk, quite a respectable figure.

Tony Richards, a TV executive in Paducah, Ky., who carries six hours of wrestling on his station, offered this observation: "In TV, most anything you do today doesn't show up in the ratings for about four to six months. I think the NWA is still suffering from the George Scott problems more than they or any of us realize. I'd like to see how they do in six months."

I would, too, because despite the fact that I sense the masses are not migrating to the NWA product, I feel the worst mistake TBS could make is to panic and make massive changes. I may stand alone in this view, but I still believe patience is a key. Of course, I'm also well aware from many in the promotion that the pressure is being felt. I know a little something about that. I still haven't recovered from the sting of those words in 1978, "Steve, we did our WORST ever!"

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Week Ending May 30	Rating	Stations	Pct. U.S.
WEF	8.0	247	97%
NWA	4.8	144	90%

(ANALYSIS: Memorial Day hammered both companies from their standard numbers. A reminder: the syndication rating is a cumulative figure for all shows produced by each group. For the average rating for each promotion's show, divide the WEF figure by 5 and the NWA by 4. One rating point = 904,000 homes.)

I REMEMBER: Mr. Wrestling vs. Cowboy Bill Watts

Mr. Wrestling, despite the glory of his success in late-1960s Georgia, had only held the Georgia heavyweight title for a four-week stint in 1967. Watts, who had come to the Georgia promotion in 1973 as booker, added the state title to his North American belt.

After the May 1973 showdown on TV, in which the masked Tim Woods defeated a hooded Watts (Dr. Scarlet) but took a post-match pasing, Woods had withdrawn from a "gold Cadillac" tournament to demand a title match with Watts.

As one of a five-card series of superevents at The Omni, Mr. Wrestling and Watts met in a classic showdown of speed, wrestling skill and power. Watts attacked before the bell and clearly had the upper hand for eight minutes. But with Wrestling II at ringside leading the crowd, his partner began to rally. At the 17-minute mark, Watts—who clearly possessed knucks—became embroiled in a dispute with II. As Watts looked away, Woods rolled up Watts in a reverse cradle and took the pin and the belt.

Watts and II then brawled all the way to the dressing room and Watts demanded a partner for an ultimate tag showdown the following week. It would be a match Atlanta fans still talk about to this day. We'll remember Watts & Jack Brisco vs. Mr. Wrestling I & II—a battle for the ages at the Atlanta City Auditorium next week.

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